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Second Meeting of General Assembly of the Federation of African Chambers of Commerce

Cairo (Egypt), 6-7 November 1985

LC/NAIROBI

REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

Cairo (Egypt) 6/7 May 1985

I. Opening Ceremony

1. The second Meeting of the Governing Council of the Federation of African Chambers of Commerce took place in Cairo, Egypt, from 6 to 7 May 1985. The meeting was officially opened by H.E. Dr. Mohamed Nagui Shatlah Minister of Supply and Internal Trade representing his Excellency Mr. Kamal Hassan Ali Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Statements were made by Dr. Sultan Abu Ali Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade, Mr. Ezzat Ghidan President of the Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce and Chief Adeyami O. Lanson President of the Federation of African Chambers of Commerce.

2. In his opening statement, Dr. Nagi Shatlah, Minister of Supply and Internal Trade welcomed the delegates and pointed out the crucial importance of the meeting as a major step in the establishment of the Federation of African Chambers of Commerce as called for by our Heads of State and Governments in the Lagos Plan of Action. He said that Egypt was a firm believer and supporter of Pan African Cooperation and Africa's collective self reliance.

3. Dr. Nagi Shatlah pointed out that he was happy that the meeting coincided with the celebrations of the Third Anniversary of the return of the Sinai to its motherland, Egypt. The meeting was also taking place at a time of peace and stability for Egypt.

4. Recalling the progress made in establishing the Federation, Dr. Nagi Shatlah commended the efforts deployed and the work done. He reiterated, however, that Africa was presently facing tremendous crisis and challenges. Nevertheless, Africa could overcome the economic problems if its considerable potentials were collectively exploited and intra-African trade expanded from its present low level. The Minister stressed the important role the Federation of African Chambers of Commerce should play in promoting intra-African cooperation for the development of the African continent. To this end he pledged Egypt's full support for the Federation and said that the necessary facilities would be offered to ease the functioning of the Federation.

5. Chief Adeyemi O. Lawson President of the Federation of African Chambers of Commerce recalled the process which lead to the establishment of the Federation of African Chambers of Commerce at the inaugural meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 17 to 19 September 1984. He stressed the role played by the Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce and the Government of Egypt and expressed the Federation of African Chambers of Commerce's gratitude for the facilities pledged by Egypt.

6. He said that the establishment of the Federation was a most welcome milestone in the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos. The Federation was a tool for African businessmen to stimulate flows of trade and investments among African countries to meet the requirement of Africa's development. He appealed to all African governments to give every support to the Federation.

7. Dr. Sultan Abu Ali, Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade and Mr. Ezzat Ghidan President of the Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce confirmed that the Arab Republic of Egypt will offer all the necessary facilities to allow the Federation of African Chambers of Commerce reach its objectives.

II. Attendance

8. The meeting was attended by delegates from the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Egypt, Djibouti, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mali, Burundi, Zaire (represented by the Embassy in Cairo), Tunisia and a representative of the President of the Federation of Central African Chambers of Commerce. The Association of African Trade Promotion Organizations (AATPO) and the Economic Commission for Africa were also represented.

III. Adoption of the Agenda

The following agenda was adopted:

1. Medium Term Plan of Action 1986-1991
2. Programme Budget 1986
3. Headquarters Agreement
4. Recruitment of Staff for the Secretariat
5. Dates and Venue of the next meeting of the Governing Council and the General Assembly Meeting
6. Any other business

IV. Procedings

1. Consideration and adoption of the Medium Term Plan - 1986-1991 (agenda item 1)

9. A representative of the Secretariat introduced document E/ECA/TRADE/21 and highlighted activities to be implemented by the Secretariat of the Federation in the field of trade information, trade promotion, trade and investment financing trade facilitation, training and technical assistance on a yearly basis for the above period.

10. The meeting congratulated the Secretariat for the valuable comprehensive and rather ambitious proposals made in the document.

11. In the course of the discussions, the meeting was informed on activities being undertaken at the ECA level for the development of Transports and Communications in Africa and the impact they were likely to have on Trade Promotion. It was further said an immediate action should be programmed to harmonize negotiating positions of African countries in dealing with maritime conferences. The Federation should include in its second medium ter plan activities to coordinate freight booking and to seek possibilities of promoting joint ventures establishing strong multinational African transport entreprises.

12. It was pointed out that the implementation of the programmes required commensurate resources and most of all a dynamic secretary-general and dedicated staff.

2. Programme Budget 1986

13. The meeting considered document E/ECA/TRADE/22 entitled "Programme Budget 1985-86". After lengthy discussions it was pointed out that the budget should be scaled down taking into account the financial situations of individual member-chambers and the environment of the host country. It was nevertheless stressed that the establishment of the Federation being a recommendation made by the African Heads of State and Governments in the Lagos Plan of Action, the African governments should be approached to provide financial resources to supplement what Chambers of Commerce could afford paying as contributions. Some delegates held the views that it should be left to each national Chamber of Commerce to approach directly its government.

14. It was agreed to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of a budget of 150,000 US Dollars with the understanding that the Secretariat shall start functioning as of 1st of April 1985. Following are the budget details and core staff to be retained at the initial stage.

A. - Secretary General's Office

- Secretary General's salary (annual)	24,000 US dollars
- Senior bilingual or trilingual secretary	5,000 US dollars
- Common staff cost	8,700 US dollars
- Travel expenses	15,000 US dollars
- Hospitality	4,000 US dollars
- Miscellaneous	1,000 US dollars
- Equipment including one car	10,000 US dollars
TOTAL	67,700 US dollars

B. - Administrative assistant

- Salary	12,000 US dollars
- Common staff costs	3,600 US dollars
- Equipment including one general service car	7,500 US dollars
TOTAL	23,100 US dollars

C. Information and Documentation

- Salary (expert)	12,000
- Steno-Typist	3,000
- Common staff costs	4,500
- Miscellaneous	1,000
TOTAL	20,500

D. General Expenses

- Maintenance of premises	4,000
- Utilities (water-electricity...)	3,600
- Maintenance of office equipment	2,000
- Communication	15,000
- Insurance	2,000
- Office supplies and printing	20,000
- Meetings (interpretation etc...)	20,000
TOTAL	66,600

Subcontracting costs for trade and investments promotion activities and training 30,000 US dollars to be entrusted to AATPO and/or ECA.

Translation	10,000 US dollars
Total budget for 12 months	217,800 US dollars

which were rounded to 200,000 US dollars. Since the Secretariat will function 9 months in 1986 expenses will be 75 per cent of the above figures which gives a total 1986 budget of 150,000 US dollars.

3. Draft Host Agreement (agenda item 3)

15. In introducing this agenda item, a member of the Secretariat explained that a draft Host Agreement had been submitted to the Egyptian Authorities for their comments. The comments so far received indicated that the Egyptian Authorities were inclined to regard the Federation as a non-intergovernmental organization and doubted whether the officials of the Federation should be granted immunities from legal process, arrest, detention and seizure of their private and official baggage. It was further explained that negotiations were being conducted on these issues with the Egyptian Authorities.

16. It was pointed out that since the parties to the Constitution of the Federation were African Countries and whose behalf the constitution had been signed, the Federation was an African intergovernmental organization. The interim secretariat was requested to bear this in mind in its negotiations with the Egyptian Authorities. The President of the Egyptian Federation of Chambers of Commerce should undertake to try to obtain the best possible conditions for the officials of the Federation and to make his report to the next meeting of the Council.

4. Recruitment of the Secretary General and other staff of the Secretariat (agenda item 4)

17. It was decided to recruit at an initial stage the core staff showed under agenda item 2 (see above). The meeting considered job descriptions and required qualifications for each of the posts of the Federation.

18. With respect to the Secretary-General the document submitted was amended to show 10 years of experience in the fields mentioned and 12 years of experience where candidates possessed a first degree only. It was also said that the Secretary General should be fluent in English or French with a working knowledge of Arabic.

19. With respect to other posts, the job descriptions were accepted and the interim secretariat (ECA) was requested to circulate vacancy announcements related to posts to be occupied in 1986.

5. Dates and Venue of Meetings of the Council and the General Assembly in 1985 (agenda item 5)

20. It was agreed that the Council will meet in Cairo Egypt on 4 and 5 November 1985. That meeting will be followed by the General Assembly meeting at the same venue (Cairo) on 6 and 7 November 1985.

6. Any other business (agenda item 6)

21. The Secretariat was requested to communicate to the Chairman a list of the countries which did not sign the constitution of the Federation of African Chambers of Commerce. It was suggested that officials of member-Chambers should try and convince non members to sign and join the Federation.

22. The Secretariat informed the meeting that ECA sent letters to Chambers which did not join the Federation requesting them to do so.

23. The ECA secretariat informed the meeting on the venue and dates of the Fourth All Africa Trade Fair to be held in Lome, Togo from 18th November to the 1st of December 1985 and requested the Federation to invite all African Chambers of Commerce to participate in the Fair.